

STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA CLASS SPECIFICATION

Class Title: Human Services Charge Nurse

Class Code: 51074

A. Purpose:

Oversees nursing care on an assigned shift or area by supervising nursing practices and/or staff, assessing the needs of patients and implementing appropriate nursing interventions, determining if a physician's attention is necessary, and following physician's orders to ensure medical care is provided to individuals with developmental disabilities or mental illnesses according to standard nursing practices and agency policy.

B. Distinguishing Feature:

Human Services Charge Nurses oversee nursing practices and/or the activities of personnel on a work shift or area and provide nursing care.

The Human Services Nurse is responsible for nursing duties in a specific area as assigned by a Human Services Charge Nurse, other nursing supervisor, or a program manager and do not have supervisory authority over other professional nursing personnel or nursing practices on a work shift.

Human Services Nursing Supervisors supervise the activities and professional nursing staff of a major patient unit or several units during a shift and may perform professional nursing duties as needed.

Nursing Unit Managers direct 24-hour patient care and nursing services for one or more patient care units and provide direct patient care only in unusual or emergency situations.

C. Functions:

(These are examples only; any one position may not include all of the listed examples nor do the listed examples include all functions which may be found in positions of this class.)

1. Directs the activities on an assigned shift or area to provide nursing services.
 - a. Provides assessments of individual's medical condition.
 - b. Conducts patient interviews.
 - c. Provides comprehensive patient care.
 - d. Reports to the physician or physician assistant on individuals' medical conditions.
 - e. Changes treatment as ordered by the physician or physician assistant.
 - f. Conducts change-of-shift reports with other nursing staff to relay changes in treatment plans, discuss patient behavior, and review significant events.
 - g. Monitors compliance with nursing policies and procedures.
 - h. Completes and/or provides input on performance appraisals of direct care staff.
 - i. Contacts local hospital to communicate needs and problems of the patient being admitted, suggests approaches to be used, and reports problems and progress to treatment team and supervisor.
 - j. Evaluates the need for one-to-one coverage by institutional staff of the patient to be admitted to local hospital and coordinates the return of patients upon discharge from the local hospital.
 - k. Determines priority of medical, dental, and optometry appointments and schedules appointments.
 - l. Makes rounds on assigned area and ensures that proper nursing procedures and practices are implemented and completed during shift.
 - m. Eliminates the risk of infection to patients and personnel.
 - n. Instructs employees on infection control and isolation policies by teaching general health and hygiene skills and isolation procedures through the use of video and written materials.

2. May supervise subordinate staff to ensure that the objectives of the work unit are met.
 - a. Interviews and selects staff.
 - b. Provides training and work direction.
 - c. Approves leave requests.
 - d. Addresses staff problems and recommends disciplinary action.
 - e. Conducts performance appraisals and completes performance documents.
3. Maintains patient records and ensures that shift activities are properly documented to provide accurate records of patient condition and behavior for treatment teams and physicians.
4. Administers medication and treatments as prescribed by a physician or physician assistant to ensure patients' medical needs are addressed and side effects from medication and treatments are documented.
 - a. Monitors patients' responses to medication and treatments and relaying data to the physician or physician assistant.
 - b. Explains prescribed medications and treatments to patients and staff.
5. Develops and updates written nursing assessments for patients and incorporates nursing interventions into the total treatment plan to provide goal-orientated care and treatment.
6. Performs other work as assigned.

D. Reporting Relationships:

May supervise or provide work direction to Human Services Nurses; Licensed Practical Nurses; Medication Aides; Developmental Disability Technicians; Mental Health Aides, Assistants, or Technicians; or other staff involved in direct patient care.

E. Challenges and Problems:

Challenges include ensuring all activity on the assigned shift or area is implemented according to accepted nursing practices and institutional policy. Ensuring that activities comply with set standards is difficult because of the number of staff and patients involved and because coordinating activities to ensure consistency of care between shifts must be scheduled in addition to routine care activities.

Typical problems include assessing the medical status of patients who are nonverbal or unwilling to provide information, finding the time to devote to training of new staff, determining if a medical problem needs the immediate attention of a physician or physician assistant, dealing with behavior problems of patients, and providing continuity of care for patients between shifts.

F. Decision-making Authority:

Decisions include determining appropriate nursing intervention needed to meet physical and emotional needs of patients, if the immediate attention of a physician is necessary, how to deal with patient behavioral problems, and if any staff disciplinary problems need to be addressed immediately.

Decisions referred include the need for major surgery, prescribing medication, the need for major disciplinary actions, and standards for institutional care.

G. Contact with Others:

Daily contact with patients to evaluate and give medical treatment; and frequent contact with physicians, physician assistants, treatment team members, and patients' families to provide information about the patients and to receive treatment orders.

H. Working Conditions:

Works at a state institution serving individuals with developmental disabilities or mental illness. Hazards include exposure to communicable diseases and physical and verbal abuse in the performance of routine daily tasks. Must be able to lift patients to and from tubs, into wheelchairs, and onto stretchers; and may be required to intervene so as to deescalate or limit disruptive or abusive behavior of patients.

I. Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:

Knowledge of:

- professional nursing theory and practices;
- recent developments in the field of professional nursing applicable to the area of assignment;
- clinical procedures.

Ability to:

- keep records and charts;
- follow oral and written instructions;
- communicate clearly and concisely;
- operate a variety of medical equipment.
- make reports on observations;
- apply general nursing techniques and practices;
- supervise;
- instruct or train nursing and direct care staff;
- maintain a helpful and sympathetic attitude toward patients;
- deal tactfully with patients and staff.

J. Licensure and Certification:

Must be licensed to practice as a registered nurse in the State of South Dakota.